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TAPe TRANSCRIPT
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Director Central Intelligence
Address to alm Beach Roundtable
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Thank you Frank. Bill Webster and I look upon ourselves as "Mr. Inside" and "Mr. Outside." He's told you about his role with the FBI and protecting this country from from counterintelligence, from the Colonel Hermans and people like this inside the United States; it's our job, as Frank has just said, to keep our eyes and ears open overseas. Clearly, this takes a lot of close coordination, cooperation between our two agencies. I liken it to a football team where you hand the ball from the halfback to the quarterback or vice versa because, as the action moves from the continental United States to the overseas territories, Bill and I hand the ball back and forth and be sure that nothing drops between the cracks. And yet, an important aspect of the CIA's activities is the atmosphere, the environment within our own country in which we are operating. The attitude, the moray, the outlook of the people of this country towards our organization and our activities. And I would like to dwell for a few moments this afternoon on the impact of the changes of the environment for intelligence in the United States have had on the Central Intelligence Agency in the past five or six years.

Just five or six years ago, for instance, our activities were largely isolated and secret--as they are in all other intelligence services around the world--but in 1975, we had the Church Committee, the Pike Committee, the Rockefeller Commission, and following it, new forms of oversight of the intelligence activities of our country. Oversight from the Congress, the White House, and Intelligence Oversight Board. And what this has meant is that today we are much more than ever before or much more than in any other intelligence service in the world, on the front pages of our newspapers

frequently. The result is that the intelligence professionals in our country must adapt their profession to ways of being more open with the American public, and yet, still being able to get their job done effectively.

There are four dimensions to this new environment and I would like to discuss them each with you briefly. The first is how it changes our internal organization and operations. Secondly, how it effects our relationships with the rest of the Executive Branch of the government. The third, our relationships with the Legislative Branch. And the fourth, our relationships with the American media and, through them, with you, the American public.

Whether, in light of these changes of environment and resulting changes in how we operate, whether we can still do the job which this country wants and needs, is indeed rightfully an issue of public concern today. I would like to look at these dimensions of change in light of the considerable discussion that is going on in this country as to how freely the Central Intelligence Agency should operate. Should it be unshackled more, and if so, how much. And if it is, at what risk to our Constitutional rights?

First let me look at the internal dimension. Traditionally the Central Intelligence Agency has had a number of separate departments that do its work. And those departments have been closely compartmented from each other. They have been compartmented in order to restrict the flow of highly sensitive information, even within our own Agency--it's that sensitive. Obviously though, there are risks when compartmentation is too tight. People may make decisions without having all the facts available; or they make judgments that are based on too narrow a focus. If there were mistakes in CIA in the past, I suspect it was because the Agency was taking actions with too narrow a perspective. It was not maliciousness, it was not callousness, it was not

that the Agency was out of control. It was not. Today, to ensure that compartmentation does not impede good decisionmaking, we are moving to a more corporate organizational structure. I use corporate in the sense that we are more consultative, more collegial, better organized for long-term decisionmaking. I hope that we are not becoming just more bureaucratic and inflexible. The disadvantage to this more corporate approach is that as you increase the number of those who know a secret activity that you inevitably increase the risk that that activity will be compromised. To reduce this risk then, while increasing the number of offices that are involved in the decisionmaking, we minimize the number of individuals within those offices who need to know and we minimize the amount of information they need to have to that which is essential to their playing their individual role.

In short, we are trying to find a happy balance between the dangers of isolated decisionmaking and the proliferation of information about secret activities to the point where it will not remain secret.

The second dimension of change in our environment is that the CIA is less independent externally today. We are less like a small family business and more like one part of a large corporate conglomerate. Within the Executive Branch, our Board of Directors is the National Security Council. Our Chairman is the President of the United States. I can assure you that today the National Security Council plays a much more active role in guiding our collection of intelligence, our analysis of intelligence information and our covert action activities than perhaps ever before in our country's history.

Now there are pluses and minuses to this as well. A big plus is that it ties us more intimately to the policymakers and their deliberations. We can

more effective in providing them the data they need if we know what their concerns really are. Another really big plus is that it encourages us to work more closely with the FBI and this team work is absolutely essential to our country.

A minus, however, is that even within the Executive Branch, the probability of a damaging leak is geometrically proportional to the number of people who know the secret information. It doesn't matter much where the people are located. For instance, even within the Executive Branch there are misplaced loyalties, people who will, in order to better in their view influence policymaking, leak to the press secret information. The inhibitions of self-restraint and patriotism which prevailed in this country so well before the Vietnam conflict, are less prevalent today in a no-holds-barred, post-Watergate environment. I can assure that this makes the job of an American intelligence professional much more difficult today.

The third dimension of change is in our interplay with the United States Congress. In years past, a few senior Senators and Representatives were kept informed about intelligence activities. Their basic view, however, was don't tell me too much. I can assure you that that attitude is long gone today. There are pluses and minuses to it being changed this way. A plus is that the advice and the counsel of the Congress helps us to keep in closer touch with you, the American public; helps us to understand what is expected of us. It also affords us a somewhat detached insight into our activities and that is always valuable. The primary disadvantage again, however, is the danger of leaks. Now in terms of leaks the Congress is no better and is no worse than the Executive Branch and overall the process of sharing with the Congress has worked well in the three years that I have been privileged to participate in it. I want to continue that relationship with the United States Congress.

Why then has there been controversy in your newspapers in recent weeks over the terms of that relationship? It is because, as Bill Webster mentioned to you, we are attempting to codify our current practices into what are known as Charters for the Intelligence Community. In so doing, in my opinion, we are inadvertently attempting to establish a degree of precision about intelligence rules that simply cannot be achieved.

Intelligence is not a science; it's a craft or maybe an art; an element of trust is vital because without it, flexibility will be lost and an intelligence service that doesn't have flexibility is just another bureaucracy. The current effort then to replace some trust with all law concentrates on two particular issues. One, is when we tell the Congress about what we are doing and the other is at what level of detail do we tell them. The question of how soon we notify the Congress is that in essence a constitutional issue. It brings up/question of what the Founding Fathers had in mind when they separated the powers of our government--powers given to the Congress under the Constitution are to legislate, to appropriate money, to impeach and, in the case of the Senate, to advise and consent on Presidential appointments. There is no provision in the Constitution for prior consultation by the Executive with the Legislature on actions which the Executive is taking under his Constitutional privileges.

With respect to the question of the amount of detail we must share with the Congress, our concern here is less the actual sharing with them than the perception of others. Outside of the United States, there are few who understand why and how we bring the Congress so intimately into our intelligence process. Agents of ours overseas and intelligence services with whom we cooperate know that their effectiveness, even their well-being, depends upon

secrecy. They also know that a politician's viability depends to a large extent upon public relations. We cannot easily persuade these people that if they share with us a great deal of information about sensitive activities, and if in turn are required to share it all with our Congress, then it will, in fact, be kept private. If they are not convinced that their equities, maybe their lives, are going to be protected when they deal with us, they will not deal with us and it is our loss.

In actual practice, in my three years of association with the Congress in this regard, they have exercised extraordinarily good judgment in not pressing us to a level of detail that was not necessary for the accomplishment of their purposes. To my knowledge, the Congress has never complained that we have provided them with inadequate detail to perform their oversight or their legislative roles effectively.

Finally, this greater openness has changed our relationships with the Fourth Estate and the American public. We do need better public understanding. No important public institution in this country can survive over the long run if it does not have the support and understanding of the American people. Accordingly we have, in recent years, attempted to become more open. We have been more open in terms of declassifying and distributing our product whenever that is possible; to making more of our analyses and our studies available to the American public, we hope to show some visible return on your investment in us. At the same time, we have been scrupulous in not talking about our sources of information; how we gather our intelligence. We expect to protect the confidence of our sources; to use them again and again and to encourage others to become our sources. In addition, we work very hard to protect information that is particularly valuable to our decisionmakers because they have it and no

one else has it--an exclusive. Thus, our new openness is in fact a controlled openness. It will work only if we can truly control access to the secret information which we have and thus reduce the danger of leaks. That is, indeed, the most serious challenge to the intelligence professional in our country today. Accordingly, we are asking the Congress of the United States to help us in three respects.

First, there is something known as the Hughes-Ryan Amendment. This Amendment has been interpreted to require that whenever we undertake what is known as a covert action we must notify up to eight committees of the United States Congress. Now revealing a covert action to more than a handful of people can risk lives unnecessarily and it really mocks the term covert. We want to reduce that notification to the two oversight committees; but on those two oversight committees, there are represented each of the other six committees that we now are required to notify. Thus, there would still be in those other committees, adequate knowledge of our covert actions when it was germane to those committees' proceedings.

We are also asking for a very limited relief from the Freedom of Information Act just as Bill has mentioned earlier. Today it is a fact that when the Russian Embassy writes to us and asks for information, we are required to search our files and determine whether that can be adduced to them. This problem is again particularly one of perceptions not so much of fact. It is the perceptions of the foreign intelligence agents and the foreign intelligence services with whom we work that bothers us. How can I ask someone to risk his life for our country, for our cause if he fears and he believes that I may be required by law to disclose his name in public? We are still willing, under the Freedom of Information Act, to provide our citizens information of an unclassified

nature about anything on them that is in our files; and we are willing to respond to enquiries about our product. But to ensure our continued ability to protect our sources from disclosure, we must have an ability to keep information about sources guaranteed private.

Lastly, we are also asking for legislation to let us prosecute those who traitorously and deliberately disclose the names of our agents and officers overseas. With acknowledged deliberateness, people like Philip Agee and others of his ilk, are trying to undermine a legally constituted institution of our government--one which you and I pay for with our taxes. With deliberate irresponsibility they are making intelligence more expensive than need be, they are reducing our effectiveness and they are placing American lives in jeopardy. For us to let this continue would be ludicrous.

Now please note, none of these three measures that we are asking the Congress to change can be described as a relaxation of controls over the Central Intelligence Agency--they are not an unleashing; they are not a return to the "good old days;" they are simply an attempt to restore a modicum of essential secrecy. Today we can move in these three directions quite safely because of the new and the effective oversight procedures that have been established within both the Executive and the Legislative Branches in recent years. Still, I recognize secrecy, any secrecy, will always be an anachronism in our society and covert action will always conflict with the American tradition of fair play. But ultimately we must recognize that in some circumstances of international competition, the Marquis of Queensbury rules are simply not appropriate. If we are to continue to be free and to be a world leader, we simply must know what is going on in the world around us. A strong intelligence capability is clearly necessary. Carping at

reasonable levels of secrecy and reasonable freedom to act covertly against hostile countries is naive and destructive. We in the intelligence profession are the sons and daughters of this nation just as are you. We are well aware of the nation's ethical standards and constitutional rights and your quite reasonable insistence that they be preserved. We have no intentions of violating your trust, nor undermining the very values and standards that we are dedicated to defending. We do not ask you simply to trust us in this regard; we strongly endorse the continuation of the oversight process, both within the Executive and Legislative Branches. It holds us fully accountable yet it permits us to function effectively. Today, then, we are poised at a balance point. A point which, if it is tipped any more in the direction of loosening our controls over our secrets, could very adversely effect our ability as a secret intelligence service. We do not ask to be unshackled. We ask to continue just as we have--successfully, over the past three years. I know of no accusation of illegality, impropriety or abuse, nor of any cause for such accusations. I know of no inference that the oversight process has not been thorough and effective during that time. We are then in the process of constructing a new, a uniquely American model of intelligence. It is tailored to American values and to our concepts of the rights and privileges of the individual; yet it does permit us to do what needs to be done for the security of our country. I ask for your understanding and your support in completing the construction of this bold, new concept. Thank you very much.